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Incorporating Empire

AFRICA IN PARLIAMENT

This year a day was set aside by Parliament, after the general debate on the Colonies, for a special debate on Africa. Very many matters were covered, but our readers may be particularly interested in the following exchanges between Conservative and Labour spokesmen, and in Mr. Creech Jones' statement on Communism in the Colonies. (Hansard 29 July).

Mr. Gammans (Conservative): In last week's Debate almost every Socialist speaker ended his speech with the most fulsome eulogies of the Colonial Secretary, from which it would appear that the Colonial Empire really started when the right hon. Gentleman went to Downing Street. . . The right hon. Gentleman did not really discover Africa. Lord Lugard, Cecil Rhodes and even Prester John were there beforehand. The right hon. Gentleman did not plant all the rubber trees in Malaya or discover the copper mines of Northern Nigeria. The right hon. Gentleman was not even responsible for the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. . . A feature of the last few years is the way in which hon. Gentlemen opposite have come down to earth and realities during that period. No one on the benches opposite wants now to give the Empire away and, so far as I know, none of them even blushes about it. . .

Mr. G. Wigg (Labour): I am very glad indeed to follow the hon. Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans) because he represents the opposite point of view to myself. . . He said that some of us had only just discovered Africa. It may be that some of us were not so fortunate in life as to acquire our interest in colonial affairs through membership of the Colonial Service. My interest and knowledge was acquired the hard way, and

my introduction to the Colonies was from the deck of a troopship. I served in almost every place where British troops are called upon to serve, and that gave me a considerable advantage over the hon. Gentleman, because I got to know the chaps in the Colonies, not through being introduced to them in the European clubs, but by meeting them on common ground. For what it is worth, I throw back to the hon. Gentleman the arrogance contained in his statement.

Mr. Gammans: How does the hon. Gentleman know from what aspect I first saw the Colonies?

Mr. Wigg: I have heard the hon. Gentleman speak on this and every other occasion, and as the years roll by I recognise that language such as he uses is one of the main reasons for our political difficulties in the Colonial Empire. I recently had the opportunity of talking to some Burmese gentlemen, and one of the things they said was that they never realised until they came here and met ordinary people that the British people were like they are. They thought they were all haughty and arrogant.

Mr. Creech Jones (Secretary of State for the Colonies): The hon. Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans) said a number of gracious things in regard to myself, but there is one thing about which I should like to disillusion him, and that is that our interest in colonial policy is not a late

discovery by the Labour Party. I have referred before, and I regret it is necessary to mention again, that great liberal tradition which came into the Labour Party in those earlier days in regard to the problems of the peoples of undeveloped areas, and particularly in regard to our colonial responsibilities.

In the last few decades I think it will be recognised that certain writers of distinction—Lord Olivier, Leonard Woolf, Buxton and J. A. Hobson, and others I could mention—have made very substantial contributions to our new approach to colonial problems. We owe something to them for the manner in which the policy is being worked out to-day, with the good will and the liberal thought and support of the British people. I emphasise—I do not want to make a party point out of this—that our tradition in our regard for the well-being and the progress of the colonial peoples is as deep rooted and goes as far back as that of any other political party. There is a mountain of literature of a very authoritative kind which has been contributed by the Labour movement to these problems.

The suggestion has been made that, as the result of the responsibilities of office, I have veered quite a lot in regard to my own approach to colonial policy. I am not conscious of it myself; I feel that my views are as emphatically held as they ever were. I am guilty of the same heresies which I used to pronounce when I was on the Opposition Benches, and I should think something was wrong with me if I found that I was running away from the basic ideas and principles which have actuated the Labour movement for so long.

May I also, in the most friendly spirit, suggest to certain hon. Members opposite that it is hardly in keeping with the facts that they should gibe at us on these benches for this interest in Colonial policy. It is unfortunate that they sometimes assume a little too patronising an air when seeking to correct what they regard as the heresies of the Labour Party, and particularly of the Fabian Society. But I can assure them that we are not just newly-won converts to the principles on which we hope the Commonwealth itself is founded—principles which it develops as the years go by—but that these ideas and principles are in accord with the Labour movement and have long been held by that movement...

The next point to which I wish to refer is Communist infiltration into our Colonial Territories. We are aware, of course, that the Communist Party in this country is concerned with a deliberate drive in our Colonial Territories, and

a great deal of their propaganda is directed towards colonial students who are over here. I think the Government have taken a fairly vigorous line in regard to subversive activities in our territories overseas. I indicated some of the steps taken when the House discussed this problem on the Supply Day for the Colonies, and I think I can assure the House that we are mindful of the gravity of this problem of colonial government, and the authorities in our territories are actively engaged in meeting this menace. But, as I said last Wednesday week, this menace will not be met by denunciation of Communist doctrine.

In some of our territories the conditions offer fertile ground for Communist propaganda, but we can only meet that propaganda effectively in so far as we raise the social standards of the people, improve the economic conditions there, and also secure the positive co-operation of the people in the responsible work of government itself. That broad line of policy we are working on, as well as the line of restricting and eliminating wherever possible the activities in which the Communists are engaged...

I am conscious, as I have said, that there is in our territories a real effort by certain Communist agents to make trouble. We shall combat it and all the necessary steps are being taken, but I should not like it thought that the troubles and difficulties in our territories are due to this cause alone.

We must recognise that there are grounds for legitimate agitation and propaganda by the colonial people and by organisations for the improvement of their own standards and to make the changes they want. Therefore, we must be conscious that while sometimes there may be a contributory cause in Communist incitement, a great deal of trouble may arise largely because of existing conditions which the authorities themselves may not at the time be competent themselves to handle. There will be and there must be agitation if there is to be any healthy political and social life in our territories at all.

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DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST INDIES

Some Doubts and Disappointments

By

Frederick W. Skinnard, M.P.

JUST before the outbreak of war in 1939, the revelations of the pessimistic Moyne Report on the British West Indies drew public attention to what its authors evidently regarded as the almost insoluble problems of our Caribbean possessions. Even if extensive schemes of economic development—the establishment of secondary industries, the checking of soil erosion and the encouragement of subsistence agriculture—were embarked upon so as to provide more adequately for the needs of the existing population, the reproductive zeal of the West Indians, increasing their numbers by 2 per cent. per annum, would outpace any remedial measures and in ten or twenty years the position would be 'as you were.'

Before any action could be taken on the Report the war was upon us, but there is no doubt that the document was partly responsible for the magnificent gesture of 1940 when Parliament, not knowing whether Britain herself would survive, passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. At that time it could scarcely be regarded as more than a promissory note, a guarantee of good intentions should we miraculously emerge victorious, but it had a revivifying effect throughout the colonial empire. True, the sum to be allocated under the Act was pitifully inadequate to the task judged by pre-war costs and conditions, and ludicrous by present standards, but that defect should not be allowed to obscure the faith and vision that prompted the action. With the coming of peace and the advent of the Labour Government, the shortcomings of the measure of 1940 were recognised, and the 1946 Act increased ten-fold the amount to be provided by Parliament. Each Colony was notified of its share of this grant and, in the light of this help, plus what it could itself raise from its own resources, was required to draw up a Ten-Year Development Plan.

As far as the West Indies were concerned, the weakness of this method of attack was the scattered nature of the territories and the fact that no fewer than nine separate governments of varying composition shared the responsibility for the welfare of only 3½ million people. Yet many of the basic problems were common to all and could

be solved only by united action, whereas the whole tradition of the various Colonies was against this mode of procedure. Parochialism and mutual mistrust had to be worn down and, as a result of an unexpectedly harmonious Conference at Montego Bay, to the success of which the knowledge, tact and sincerity of the Secretary of State made an outstanding contribution, the desirability of Federation was accepted in principle and a Customs Union Commission as well as a Standing Committee for Closer Association were set up.

Since the poverty of resources of most Colonies made it obvious that their Development Plans even with the grants from the Imperial Exchequer would provide only partial relief, the Colonial Development Corporation was set up, with its own funds, to survey regional needs and undertake projects beyond the capacity of any small territorial unit to initiate and control. A subsidiary of this organisation is charged with the preparation of schemes for the general benefit of the West Indies. Discussions are proceeding between the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Corporation for assistance in financing the latter's projects and, quite recently, a Colonial Loans Bill has been introduced in Parliament to enable our Government to guarantee any loans which Colonial Governments may desire to negotiate with the Bank although, so far, no application of this kind has been made.

Never before in the history of the Empire has there been such comprehensive provision made for development, but the test of its effectiveness will lie not so much in the ingenious variety of its administrative agencies as in the full use made of the opportunities it offers. What schemes have been already started under the aegis of the Colonial Development Corporation? How far in each Colony has its own Government now proceeded with the Ten-Year Plan, and how much of its grant has been expended? No one expects more than a beginning, having regard to the nature of the times and, in particular, the difficulty of obtaining capital equipment, but there should by now be some concrete evidence to convince the colonial peoples themselves that the much pub-

licised plans are being translated into action to some degree of demonstrability. It is disquieting, for instance, to learn that the Barbados Legislature has not yet approved its own plan. There is crying need for economic development all over the Empire, but the most desperate urgency exists in the West Indies. For that reason it is natural that the first enquiry should be addressed to the amount of progress in that region.

Broadly speaking, the root evils there are over-population in the islands and under-population in the undeveloped and largely unsurveyed mainland Colonies of British Guiana and British Honduras, which cannot contribute materially to the wealth and well-being of the West Indies without considerable immigration. This was underlined in the Report of the Evans Commission, so the first question must be what is being done to implement its recommendations.

Here one must confess to a feeling of profound disappointment. As far as one can judge, the Colonial Development Corporation has made headway only in the preparation of the forestry scheme in British Guiana with the expert assistance of Booker Brothers and Steel Brothers, important concerns whose dominating position in the Colony can be compared with that of the United Africa Company in Nigeria or the Gold Coast. Important as this is for opening up the hinterland and adding quickly to the revenue, it must be remembered that it will employ comparatively few workers, and these locally recruited. Under the Ten-Year Plan, the Government itself is doing good work in extending and modernising rice cultivation in the coastal belt but, again, local labour is adequate. There are large areas suitable for cocoa growing and for plantations of the Conga banana, which is immune from Panama Disease, but large-scale operations are dependent on the dredging of the Essequibo River and the attraction of a sufficient number of refrigerated ships. The two crops could then very well attract emigrants from Barbados and Jamaica. With the power plant at Arvida in Quebec now fully extended, the bauxite interests are becoming really interested in hydro-electric potential in the Colony, but a five-year survey of flow is necessary before a firm judgment can be formed, although the first year's figures are most encouraging.

While the difficulties of development in British Guiana are undeniably great owing to the nature of the country itself, it is puzzling that more has not been done in British Honduras where relatively little survey work would be necessary and where there is firm knowledge of what crops flourish. The recent announcement that a private

company has been formed, with capital derived partly from London and partly from the West Indies themselves to exploit the very possibilities to which the Evans Report called the Government's attention, is a reminder that swift action is necessary if planned and balanced production is to be achieved.

I am inclined to believe that too many possibilities have been put before the Corporation and the individual governments, so that they hardly know where to deploy their limited financial, material and technical resources. The criterion of choice should surely be not the easiest project or the most popular in a particular Colony, but what will best conduce to the prosperity of the British West Indies as a whole.

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on which we are now moving? And this implies a continuity for a time of that relation that our critics call 'imperialistic.' Dr. Hinden says, 'the imperialist relation *in itself* is evil.' To take an example far enough in time to permit an objective judgment, was the imperial relation of Rome and Britain in its results an evil? This was not monopolist-capitalist imperialism, but does she accept the criticism that our relation with the Colonies always has been and is now 'monopoly-capitalist'? To make judgments on what things are *in themselves* leads to the depths.

We ought to and we want to rid ourselves of superiority and patronage in our dealings with colonial peoples. This Dr. Hinden feels acutely, but whether it will help us towards the practical application of an equally important idea is doubtful. She believes that 'we have the right to help people only if we recognise their right to refuse our help.' This would result in a real partnership not in 'domination disguised by pretty names.' The word 'right' is used not unequivocally in this passage, but leaving that, how is 'refusal' to be evaluated? Are we not back at the dilemma that faced Lenin and Stalin in their consideration of the 'right' of territories to secede from the U.S.S.R.? Is there not implicit in Dr. Hinden's principle the idea either that we assume the right to judge the extent and the genuineness of the refusal, hardly a justifiable function of one member of an equal partnership, or that we persist until we are driven out by open or passive revolt?

Dr. Hinden's study raises difficult issues. Her tone is that of the student and inquirer not generally of the prophet. Even when no suggestion of solution can be offered, it is clear gain that, against the historical background, the issues are defined. She proves the need of honest thinking if we are to achieve what we desire, namely, that the Colonies shall wish to remain in the Commonwealth.

She looks even further ahead to those strains that the diversity of race and tradition within the Commonwealth are sure to engender, and speculates briefly on how the colonial peoples then will fare. Wisely, however, she leaves this issue unargued in her present study. She has done a first-rate job in so clearly presenting the present issues in a manner that should compel consideration. This is not a small achievement.

D. J. S.

DILEMMA IN THE COLONIES

'To-day, when Britain, more than ever before, has embarked on really far-reaching and imaginative advances in colonial policy . . . the colonial peoples have become increasingly hostile to the whole of the British regime.'

CLEARLY we are awkwardly placed. Dr. Rita Hinden, in her new study *Empire and After*,¹ has very carefully considered the implications of all this against her background survey of the development of ideas on colonial policy from Hakluyt's day to Lord Hailey. She perhaps over-estimates, not the depth, but the extent of hostility. Nevertheless the evidence she gives is sufficient to disturb that great body of men of all political affiliations who know that in these matters we are acting with complete good faith, and—one might justifiably add—with marked generosity. What then are we to do? Are we to persist on our present course? Can we do anything to turn the antagonism that now faces us into a willingness to co-operate, and, if so, how? These are issues that Dr. Hinden's admirable study raises, but she finds no solution and can suggest only that we should continue as we are going but with better manners than we hitherto have practised.

Dr. Hinden's quotations from our political thinkers would justify the inference that the British people rarely have been convinced imperialists, or, perhaps, it might be truer to say that in spite of our success in implementing various types of colonial policy, we have been weak on imperialist doctrine except in a short period towards the end of the nineteenth century. Now, conditions force us to consider the doctrine because, sure of the soundness of our present practice, we are challenged on the fundamentals of imperialist theory by the colonial peoples and by many of our American and European allies. We have accepted the implications of the notion of self-determination, yet at the same time we are inspired by a deep desire to do our duty by the Colonies in spite of the objections of a proportion of the more articulate of the inhabitants thereof, who demand our immediate withdrawal. Which must prevail, our respect for strongly expressed colonial opinion or our sense of a duty to the Colonies?

This is not a dilemma peculiar to the 'imperialist' peoples. Dr. Hinden in this singularly uncontroversial treatment of the most controversial of political themes illustrates, though this is not the aim of her quotations from their writings, that Lenin and Stalin have had to face a parallel issue in considering whether the principles of self-determination require that any Soviet Republic of the Union shall be free to secede at will. Stalin's conclusion is 'When we recognise the right of oppressed people to secede, the right to determine their political destiny, we do not thereby settle the question of whether particular nations should secede at the given moment . . . the recognition of the right to secession must not be confused with the expediency of secession in any given circumstances.' This would seem to mean that the right in the matter of secession lies with the Union of Soviet Republics, not with the people of the aggrieved state; sound sense, but hardly the interpretation put on the doctrine of self-determination by the West African press.

There is no direct guidance in these scriptures nor is

there in the citations from Burke, Adam Smith, Cobbett, Disraeli, Chamberlain, Mary Kingsley, and J. A. Hobson that Dr. Hinden has chosen. There is illumination in the evidence that after ebb and flows, twists and turns, our thinking has caught up with the fundamental ideas of Burke and Adam Smith, with the not insignificant difference that we now are striving to apply everywhere ideas that seemed to them applicable to 'white' Colonies. This is not to say that the historical survey is profitless. Even if we get no prescription for dealing with our fevered state, the nature of our ailment is somewhat cleared, we know what *not* to do, we are assured that there is a cure somewhere.

Paternalism will not do, the Colonies will have none of it. We have, in the time at our disposal and in adverse world conditions, made a fine showing of our practical interpretation of the criterion of Trusteeship in Mr. Creech Jones' speech when he took over the Secretanship of State. 'The test of our policy should not be British advantage but the happiness, prosperity and freedom of the colonial peoples themselves'. Dr. Hinden's chapter *The Flowering of Trusteeship* is a record so good that it well may provoke scepticism in our American and European critics. Readers of this journal know what has been done and what is in progress and, a matter perhaps of greater importance, they know that, in spite of a degree of obscurantist opposition, we intend to complete the programme, if only the colonial peoples will let us. Dr. Hinden's next chapter suggests that in this last condition lies our real problem. She calls it *The Failure of Trusteeship*.

Trustees or Friends?

But is not the judgment of failure premature? And if there is failure what is to happen next? Not the most convinced anti-imperialist, Mr. J. A. Hobson, for example, has advocated that we immediately should pack up and go. The results in many places would be to bring on intolerable evils; in none does this course promise immediate gain. Dr. Hinden thinks that hope lies in changing our attitude by acting not as trustees but as friends of colonial peoples regarded as equal with us in status if not in power. She quotes from Mr. Alfred Cobban's *National Self-Determination*. 'The conception of equality belongs not to the field of power but to that of rights'; an unexceptionable conception, but how is it to govern our attitude, for example, in the problem of those 'plural and incoherent societies' with which we must deal in so many colonial areas? Intellectually it is easy to admit that the politically most backward communities in East Africa have rights to no less a degree of 'economic, cultural and spiritual well-being' than have the people of this island, and the admission may produce the negative good of preventing acts that might restrict the enjoyment of these goods by colonial peoples. But, if positively we wish these goods to be enjoyed in the fullest measure, what can we do but persist on the road

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¹ Publishers: *Essential Books*, 12s. 6d.



IF colonial happiness were measured by the number of words written and spoken, the Colonies would be very happy indeed. This month we have to record no less than four major reports, and colonial debates spread over two days, with preference given to speakers who promised to be brief as many wished to get in. The reports include the Annual Report on the Colonial Territories (not *Empire*, as formerly); the Annual Report of the Colonial Research Council, and its six Research Committees; the Annual Report of the Colonial Development and Welfare Activities; and the first Annual Report of the Colonial Development Corporation. As if that were not enough, we also have the first Annual Report of the East African High Commission. It is perhaps enough to indicate that these formidable documents are available, for, as Dr. Johnson said, *Knowledge is of two kinds, what you know, and where to get it.* To indicate something of the scale, we can say that 257 C.D. and W. schemes were approved in the year, which will cost the taxpayer £10,302,884 in grants and £324,625 in loans, while £6,354,084 were actually allotted. Research schemes, of which there were 123, cost £1,652,169, and the actual expenditure was £741,702, much the highest total ever spent. Nor is this momentum going to slow down, for the House has been asked to allow ceilings of £20m. a year for development and welfare, and £2m. for research. The first report of the Development Corporation was a more sober document, but even it revealed that £3m. has been committed on nine schemes, while 57 more are being considered at a total cost of £35m. It seems to be concentrating mainly on the backward areas at the moment, because of their lack of capital. Thus Guiana is to have its timber forests developed by the firm of Steel Brothers, late of Burma; North Borneo is to make hemp; the Dead North of Nyasaland, high among the Vipya Mountains, is to have over £1m. spent on tung-oil farms, and experimental farms, with all the communications that are needed; and the Gambia is to produce 20m. eggs a year on a former airfield if the Ministry of Food are prepared to pay the price. Such news seems a nice balance between the needs of Britain and the needs of the Colonies: there is to be no ceiling to profits, which will in any case all be ploughed back.



IN colonial development, we seem to be taking a leaf out of the French book: or it may be that they took a leaf out of ours, observing the bottleneck that developed in the groundnut scheme for lack of a proper port. At any rate, Dar-es-Salaam may be considerably improved, with backing even from the far-off Congo; while Taylor Woodrow are to start work on Takoradi, with a new lee breakwater and extensions to the main breakwaters, at a cost of over £2m. Already a township for 2,000 workers with their families is going up at Efiakuma. A little way up the Gold Coast, the first consumers co-oper-

tive started in Accra on July 11, and a mission from the C.W.S. is discussing further developments. In Nigeria, a special committee has recommended some 26 development schemes to help ex-servicemen: pigs, vegetables, poultry, bricks, cloth fertilisers, transport service, may cost £220,000. This month there is probably £68m. circulating in the four territories, which is £22m. more than a year ago, and six times 1939. Such figures make one happy (despite inflation), although it is a pity to see the export figures for Ferguson tractors; 2,000 to the Union 6 to West Africa. . . Over on the Nile, a delegation from the Hydro-electric scheme at Jinja has been seeing how the T.V.A. can guide the phosphates industry at Tororo. In the Sudan, 6,000 families have benefited from one season's campaign of digging 50 *hafirs*, or water-holes in the Nuba Mountains, by a team of six scrapers, a rooter and a bulldozer, with their train. On the preventive side, Dr. B. P. Uvarov, the world-famous authority on locusts, has given warning of a possible repetition, from the 'Empty Quarter' of Arabia, of the five-year plague between 1942 and 1947, which cost £6m. to repel. All this technical work is European; and in Kenya the Kikuyu settlers at Olengurone have had to be ousted for disobeying the rules of husbandry. On the other hand, the Kenya Governor has had to speak frankly to white settlers, who, no more than the Africans, like the compulsory nature of the new Agricultural Bill. It is also good news to read of a report on agricultural extension work made by C. W. Lynn, an agricultural officer from the Northern Gold Coast, who has been studying farm instruction work in England, Canada, the U.S.A. and Puerto Rico. It is even better to know, in a different field, that an African engineer attended the Empire Metallurgical Congress for the first time, representing the Department of Mines in Sierra Leone, and that in the same enlightened Colony, a committee under Siaka Stevens, the trade unionist is examining the terms of mining leases.



THE politics of Africa are in a state of almost continuous crisis. In Nigeria, most of the provincial conferences have met on the constitution, and all, or almost all, seem to support regionalisation. In the Gold Coast, where Sir Gerald Creasy is succeeded by Sir Charles Arden Clarke, Kwame Nkrumah led a break-away from the Convention in June. A subsequent arbitration committee moved to reinstate him as Secretary-General at £600 a year, on condition that his Ghana



October meeting in Jamaica, which will hear reports on customs union and the unification of public services.



Schools, and Ghana Youth Organisations, came under the main body. This in turn led to the resignation of Dr. J. B. Danquah, and 20 moderate members of the working committee. At the same time, Nii Kwabena Bonne III, the trader-chief who organised the boycott before the riots, is forming a Unionist party, although we are not told who the Union is with. In Sierra Leone the Governor has proposed a Ministerial system, with four Africans in Executive Council, and considerable devolution in the Protectorate to new Provincial Authorities. Over in East Africa, the Executive Committee of the Kenya Electors Union has recommended the removal of Tanganyika from Trusteeship, with freehold, or 999-year leaseshold, introduced for the present 33-year holdings. They received support from a Union businessman. Meanwhile, the Member for Agriculture congratulated Chief Kidaha Mukwaia for 'one of the best speeches in 10 years in this Council,' when opposing prices fixed by the Livestock Board in the Territory's cattle-markets. In Central Africa, Mr. Welensky has been clashing with some of his colleagues, especially Fred Morris, who fear control by the South; and there are disquieting (and frequent) little episodes like the 15 Afrikaner farmers who recently waited on the editor of the *Central African Post*, for daring to print a letter from an African hostile to the increasing Boer element. In Bechuanaland, the Bamangwato supported Seretse (or rejected the energetic Tshekedi), and the onus of deciding whether a white woman can rule as wife of a Bantu chieftain has now been passed to a Judge of the High Court. A few days before, the Privy Council rejected an appeal from ritual murderers in Basutoland, on the ground that the subordinate law of the territory is Roman Dutch, which admits the evidence of accomplices.



So far the points of the compass have been mainly African. Let us turn our attention to the other two-thirds of our world. In the West Indies, Jamaica still continues to make heavy weather. Her budget is £10,304,997, the largest in history, and it was introduced by Alexander Bustamante, speaking for 4½ days. He is now in Britain attempting to get a higher price for sugar. Outside the Assembly, rioting broke out again. Unemployment is fantastic, with 20-30,000 new hands on the market every year, and a ban on luxury imports has been suggested by a Kingston business man. In Barbados the third meeting of the Standing Committee on Closer Association prepared a draft federal constitution for an

THE main non-African news is of course of South-Eastern Asia. Here only Ceylon remains an oasis of peace, with further steps in independence, like the formation of a Reserve Bank with its own currency. On June 30, Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene became the first Ceylonese Officer Administering the Government, until the arrival of Lord Soulbury a week later as the new Governor-General. For the first time, too, Singalese has been used in the Senate, the limiting factor being the shortage of stenographers. The island is to exchange envoys with Burma, another Government which seems to be emerging from the worst period of the Communist-inspired troubles. In Malaya, we were told by the High Commissioner in May, the Communist bands are being driven further into the jungle, with less than 3,000 left, although they were reported active in Perak a month later. Of the 1,000 captured or killed since June 1948, 955 were Chinese. In a recent report the anthropologist, Raymond Firth, has declared that there is no single study on Chinese-Malay relations; and it is therefore good news that a Communities Liaison Committee has been formed, with 6 Malays, 6 Chinese, 1 Indian, 1 Ceylonese, and 1 Eurasian. Within the Malay orbit, there has been a clash between the ambitious *Mentri Basar* (Prime Ministers) led by Dato Onn of Johore, and their rulers, one of whom, the Sultan of Kedah, banned the United Malays National Organisation (U.M.N.O.) in his state. In Indonesia, which has to be considered within this region (India, Pakistan and Ceylon have lifted the ban on Dutch aircraft), the Republican Government returned to Jogjakarta on July 6 as a first stage for round-table discussions for a federal system between Holland, Java and the 14 states which stand outside the Republic. There is now some difficulty over the question of an undissolvable inner cabinet, which the Republicans want to be the normal cabinet. They also want a Senate to have limited powers. The picture in Indo-China is less happy with gunpowder that was not fireworks prepared for the reception of the Emperor Bao Dai; but the French have given a little more independence to the (Indian) State of Laos, which may now appoint its own diplomatic representative to neighbour countries like Siam. Finally, in Hong Kong the troop concentration will shortly number as much as 25,000, and half that number, who have already arrived, are being formed into the 40th Division. On June 22, the six Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council under Sir Man Kam Lo voted unanimously against the proposed Municipal Council, in favour of a new Legislative Council with 11 Unofficials against 6 Official members. Merchants are already shipping goods to Tientsin and the smaller northern ports although Shanghai is under the Nationalist blockade. Meanwhile, the Communist forces are round Changsha in Hunan Province, and should be on the borders of the Mainland Area of Hong Kong in a very few weeks time.

They came up out of the Valley with the sun. They walked long striding from the valley floor with dew on their feet and sun on their faces and a song pouring from their throats.

The song poured from their throats and gathered wings that took it around the brown walls of earth and up to the green canopy of trees and further up so that it may have perhaps knocked on the blue door of heaven.

They came up out of the Valley with the sun and took the hill road to Ma Susan's.

The song they now sang, was old. Ancient as Africa which was too ancient for them to know, so they gave to it words they knew but kept the tune which was as ancient as Africa. They sang the song with toes climbing into brown earth and hoes flashing and clanking as they twirled them . . .

*One Monday morning—hol' him, Joe!
Go down a Chapelton—hol' him, Joe!*

Juniper, and cedar, and red coffee berries, dew dripping from their leaves to be jewels falling through the air and then to be food for the earth as the earth folded them from sight. Rich smells of the full heavy trees waking to the embrace of day and the kiss of the sun, and giving in thanksgiving to the day and the sun all the rich smells.

*Meet up 'Keziah—hol' him, Joe!
Ask me for the doctor—hol' him, Joe!*

To the tune, singing new words for old words that were too ancient for them to know.

There was a round dozen of them, men and women. They walked long striding up the hill and around a corner and past the breadfruit tree and by the red rock that marked the boundary of Coaz Levi's and up Timothy's Bump and around another corner and there was Ma Susan's. The song changed.

*Mawnin' Coaz Joseph . . . Coaz Davie . . .
The angels come to tell you how-de-doo . . .*

New words to old tunes.

They swung past the bastard cedar that marked the gateway to Ma Susan's and sang and laughed as they met the old woman who wagged her bandanna-ed head to the tune and curtsied in mock solemnity.

*Mawnin', Ma Susan . . .
Mawnin', Me gyal . . .
God be, Ma Sue . . .
Mawnin', Bro' Amos . . . mawnin' Lucy . . .
Mawnin', Coaz Joseph . . . Coaz Davie . . .*

The song was ended for the time being; for there was hot cerasee and mint teas bubbling in the big met-pot, and Johnny cakes and fire-roast potatoes were spread under the lacy white towel.

* We select this story from a volume of short stories, poems, legends and plays by Jamaican writers. The volume entitled Focus, Jamaica 1948, is edited by Edna Manley. The first Focus appeared five years ago, but war difficulties delayed the second volume. Its publication was only made possible by the fact that supporters paid in advance for their copies.

DIGGING MATCH*

By

VICTOR REID

People must eat before their toes bed into the brown earth that is waiting for the hoes. Feast before the marriage consummation.

'Meg, gal, how the heifer?'
'Drop last week, Ma Sue.'

'Thankie, gal; Coaz Joe, you come help Ma Sue put in her peas?'

'Yes, Ma Sue. Best time now, eh?'

'Four now, you did know, ma?'

'Me hear, gyal. What a way you quiver full-O!'

Laugh, and the sun on their faces and under the skin of their faces and on the rich earth that is waiting for their hoes . . . the earth that smells of life and the things that will make life.

People have eaten their full.

'Come-O! Come-O! Day-cloud gone long time now.
Line up! Line up!'

'We here with you, Coaz Joe . . . Come, Meg—
Lucy-O!'

Up on the hillside with the waiting brown earth, people must stand so their toes grip the earth and room is left for the swing of their hoes.

Lucy and Meg and Tamah must sling the bancra baskets over their arms . . . the baskets that hang full with red peas.

Into line . . . line up . . . Joe and Amos and Davie and Timothy . . . everybody fall into line for Singer Boy is ready with his timing stick and his song.

Into line, with room to swing; and as the furrows grow slowly along the hillside and reach from boundary to boundary then step back Joe and Amos and Davie and Timothy and everybody. And into line once again, another line of furrows will grow along the hill.

Then forward will step Lucy and Meg and Tamah, and red peas will sprinkle from their fingers into the furrows, to lay with sun and rain and earth until green life pushes up.

Sing it, Singer Boy, new words to old tunes the words of which are too old to know.

*Hill and gully rider
As you go right 'round . . .*

They have come to help Ma Susan, for she is old and her land is wide and to eat, her land must be wide. So they came up out of the Valley and now their hoes are bedding into the earth as they plant the peas that will make her eat.

*As you go right 'round . . .
Digging match-O!*

*If you tumble down you break you neck
If you break you neck you go to hell,
If you go to hell the Devil glad . . .*

CORRESPONDENCE

Welfare Officers and West Indian Psychology

To the Editor, *Venture*.

Sir.—Here in the West Indies people are asking just what benefit is accruing from the work of the avalanche of welfare and development folk who have descended upon them. While some of their work comes under fire because of the innate conservatism of the people themselves and their intense distrust at the present time of Englishmen, there is, I feel, some reason in their criticism and a danger of its leading to a rather cynical spirit of non-co-operation in schemes which may be of value.

It takes a considerable amount of time and study of our people out here with much personal contact and friendship to understand their psychological make-up and their real hopes and aspirations. Young men and women with sound training in various spheres of sociology, but frequently without any understanding of the West Indian pattern of life, are let loose in our midst. They have come out here with some sense of their vocation to the people and armed with technical ability based on sound training at home. Yet in the case of many of them things begin to go wrong at the start.

Young welfare officers find themselves for the first time upon the fringe of a rather gay and care-free set of people whose one aim is pleasure and who often despise the coloured folk upon whom they depend. They are often whipped up into a round of parties at which there is plenty to eat and more to drink. They soon learn to neglect, if not despise, the coloured people they have come to serve. They are encouraged by local white farmers, especially the planters, to play with their job and accept the conservative viewpoint of treating the coloured folk like children to be petted, scolded and patronised from without instead of helping them to find their feet and accept responsibility themselves. They soon find that they are on the wrong side of the fence and not really getting through to the people themselves. Instead of visiting the backward country areas they hang about clubs and hotels in the towns. They make their centres not where they are most needed but where there will be the right kind of social life. Fundamentally they have to learn that in the West Indies the psychological approach is more important than even the economic. The people instinctively know who really wish to befriend them, and they are not deceived or impressed for long by people who are not really willing to throw their lot entirely in with them.

The stay made by many welfare officers is far too short to be of any permanent value. They may even have got as far as the fringe of understanding a little about life in the West Indies, and then it is time for them to go elsewhere. I sometimes wonder, if after years of service in the West Indies, some of us even penetrate the surface of the life many of our people are living. Background and opportunity have been so very different. There is so much which is consciously or subconsciously hidden from the sight of Europeans and of which we only catch occasional glimpses on the rare occasions when it comes to the top strata. Our conceptions of morality are so very strongly coloured by English tradition, and some people will play up to our code without really accepting it or understanding why we act as we do.

Much of this only becomes slightly visible to Englishmen after many years' experience, and I feel most strongly the need, not of highly trained Englishmen in the West Indies, but the fuller and more careful training of the many intelligent young West Indians who have their roots in the West Indies and can approach the needs of their fellow islanders with a balanced experience, based on living among them from the earliest years. Part of their training should most certainly be given to them in England to enable them to link their practice to theory. I have met many of our welfare people and hold many of them in high respect, but I often wonder what would really remain of their labours a year after they had been recalled. We are not getting down to the roots of our problems, but gaily skimming over the surface like the flying fish, and always hoping for the best.

L. A. D. Woodland (Rev.).

St. Mark's Vicarage,
St. John, Barbados.

Miss Margaret Wrong Memorial Fund

The following letter appeared in the issue of *The Times* for 6th May, 1949:—

To the Editor of *The Times*.

Sir.—By the death of Miss Margaret Wrong in Uganda in 1948 at a comparatively early age Africans and African students in particular, as well as those interested in African affairs, suffered a grievous loss. Miss Wrong spent her whole life in the Christian service of youth, but she devoted her last 20 years to the cultural and spiritual development of tropical Africa. Her wise counsel, based upon a knowledge of Africa unique in its depth, range and sympathy, was of great service, not only to missions and churches, but also to colonial Governments and educational authorities. She was particularly concerned, as secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, in the provision of suitable books to satisfy the demands of the rapidly growing literacy in that continent.

We feel that many of her friends in Africa and elsewhere would like to perpetuate her memory by the institution of a Margaret Wrong Prize, to encourage literary productions from Africa, either in English, French, or any other suitable language, and if possible, to subsidise their publication. We are willing to offer our services for the organisation of a fund to establish such a prize. Any of her friends, or institutions with which she was associated, are invited to send subscriptions to the Margaret Wrong Memorial Fund, care of Rev. Michael Davidson, M.A., Institute of Christian Education, 46, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

We are, Sir, yours truly,

T. COCKER BROWN, P. H. CANHAM, CHATFIELD, MICHAEL N. DAVIDSON, B. D. GIBSON, HAILEY, E. G. HAWKESWORTH, RITA HINDEN, H. D. HOOPER, SETH I. KALE, MARGARET READ, U. H. S. SNOW, IDA WARD, W. E. F. WARD.

Guide to Books

Australia in New Guinea

By L. P. Mair, Ph.D. (Christophers. 18s.)

The greater part of the book is a detailed account of administration (or lack of it!) in New Guinea through the pre-war period. It is not easy reading except for anthropologists, who have always found in this part of the world an excellent field of work, or for experts in colonial administration, who can compare Australian methods with those of other countries; but for the determined student there is a wealth of information here, otherwise all but unknown.

The account of the use of the natives by the Australians and Americans during the war against Japan is of more immediate interest, though somewhat horrifying. In a war, whose causes were not understood by a people who had little interest in whether they were governed by Germans, Australians or the Japanese, forced labour was inflicted to a point where 'in those days every man able to walk a mile was being roped in; there was relief for none unless they were utterly broken down in health',—and all this on a flat wage rate of 10s. a month. Although the wage quoted was an improvement on New Guinea rates for plantation labour it was a heavy reduction for the skilled workers of Papua and resented as such. The natives also suffered through insufficient men being left to work the land at a time when they had to provide the troops with local food as well as maintain their own communities.

One influence entirely to the good is shown by the statements made to an anthropologist in 1944, who was told that the newcomers, the Australian troops, 'are sorry for us,' in contrast to their previous experience of white men who 'did not think we were men' who 'said we were dogs' or who 'beat us.' Another enlightening influence came through their contact with American *negro* troops. They made a deep impression. For the first time, they saw coloured men wearing clothes like the white man (the natives were forbidden to wear clothes above the waist for sanitary reasons) and coloured men who could handle machines. The natives grasped the possibility of learning how to achieve wealth and power, if only, as they said, the Australian troops would stay in their country and teach them.

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The future progress of these million or more people is uncertain. Dr. Mair points out that the Labour Government and the Labour Party of Australia have shown no interest in native affairs. The present administrator, Colonel J. K. Murray, has proved himself to be a greater fighter on behalf of a more liberal native policy—but he faces the opposition of the unofficial whites and most of the senior members of the Public Service, as well as lack of support from the Department of External Territories.

H. B.

The Pattern of Imperialism

By E. M. Winslow. (Columbia University Press;
London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 21s.)

This is not an easy book to read and understand. Dr. Winslow is an American economist who has tried to get under the skin of such terms as 'economic imperialism' and 'the economic causes of war,' and thus to challenge the idea that it is the economic system which causes political conflict and the phenomena of imperialism. He believes that it is our *political* ineptitude which leads us to follow the wrong methods and bring disaster on our heads rather than basic economic forces. To come to this conclusion we are taken through a cumbersome survey of theories on imperialism—the nineteenth-century writers, Marx, Hobson, Neo-Marxist theories, and so on. What really seems to emerge from the book, however, is a defence of the system of free enterprise as against Socialism. As the blurb on the cover states 'the spirit and rationale of free enterprise capitalism tends away from war and conflict towards a fundamentally peaceful, co-operative pattern.' But free enterprise must be controlled, and that should be done, not by nationalising production, but by controlling money and credit. The book thus presents a curious hodge-podge of economic discussion on the one hand, and imperialist theory on the other. It is a pity, because Dr. Winslow's starting-point was a good one.

R. H.

Just Published

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Parliament

Inquiry into disturbances in Uganda. Mr. Skinnard asked whether in view of the recent reports that there had been a considerable number of cases of arson and that there was increasing activity of a very serious nature, would it not be advisable to publish the report as soon as possible. Mr. Creech Jones said that there was no doubt that the Commissioner was working as fast as he could take the evidence and that there would be no delay on his part in submitting the report. (June 29.)

Racial discrimination in Kenya. Mr. Driberg asked whether the Secretary of State was aware that racial discrimination in hotels and restaurants was still widespread in Kenya and deeply resented by educated Africans, and whether therefore he would request the Government of Kenya to consider following the precedent set in Nigeria where licences were refused to hotels imposing a colour bar. Mr. Creech Jones said that the Government of Kenya was doing all that was possible and practicable to break down colour discrimination. It was not considered that the introduction of legislation on the lines suggested would at present be the best line of advance, that he had discussed the whole question with the Governor recently in Nairobi and he hoped that some progress would be made. (June 29.)

School meals in Singapore. Dr. Barnett Stross asked whether a school meals scheme had been introduced in Singapore under the auspices of the Social Welfare Department; and how many children had benefited from it. Mr. Rees-Williams said that the Singapore Welfare Department distributed soup to some 3,400 children daily in certain of the poorer schools. In addition, full meals were supplied daily to 3,000 children of whom about 2,000 were of school age but not attending school. In reply to a question on the number of beds available for the treatment of tuberculosis, Mr. Rees-Williams said that there were now 400 beds compared with 72 before the war.

Special language schools in African Colonies. Mr. Skinnard asked (1) in view of the undesirability of Kenya and Northern Rhodesia becoming Afrikaans-speaking colonies, whether he would discourage the official provision of special schools for the children of South African settlers of Dutch descent; (2) in how many cases special provision was being made from public funds for the maintenance of Afrikaans-language private schools in Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika and Kenya. In reply, Mr. Rees-Williams said that grants-in-aid were provided for one Afrikaans-language private school in Tanganyika and one in Nyasaland. The official provision for special language schools was where possible avoided and there was no necessity for the action suggested. (July 13.)

Constitutional changes on the Gold Coast. Mr. A. Edward Davies asked whether the changes in the 1946 Constitution and the pattern of local government recommended by the Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances in the Gold Coast during February and March, 1948, had been implemented; and what was the present position. Mr. Rees-Williams replied that the Representative Committee of Africans, which was appointed by the Governor to examine the proposals made by the Commission of Inquiry, was still in session. He added that he was told that the Commission was nearing the end of its inquiries, but he could not give any specific date. (July 13.)

Constitutional proposals, Nigeria. Mr. Sorensen asked what progress was being made respecting discussions on new constitutional proposals for Nigeria and procedure in respect of these; how many representatives had resigned and for what reasons. Mr. Rees-Williams said that discussion at District level had been almost completed. The Lagos and colony conferences had ended, but their reports were still awaited. Provincial conferences were being or would shortly be held. The procedure was laid down in the Report of the Nigerian Select Committee. The only withdrawal known to the Nigerian Government occurred in Lagos, where 11 representatives from a conference of 54 had withdrawn following a decision by the full conference that its decision should be recorded by resolutions taken on a majority vote. (July 13.)

Macusi tribe of British Guiana. Mr. Skinnard asked to what extent members of the Macusi tribe who had declined to move from their present lands to facilitate rancher settlement, would be deprived of the present special rights granted to Indians living outside a Reserve. Mr. Creech Jones replied that no decision had yet been reached on a proposal that the Macusi should move to a new area, nor would they be invited to move unless in their own interest. In a supplementary Mr. Skinnard pointed out that there was a suggestion that some form of sanction might be imposed if they refused to move, such as compulsory registration involving the carrying of a certificate. (July 20.)

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LAST YEAR'S DISTURBANCES IN BRITISH GUIANA

THE Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Shootings on the Enmore Estate in June, 1948, is now available, and makes sad reading. It is idle to apportion blame; so many organisations and departments were involved in the cause of the strike which led up to the shooting of five workers and the injuring of 14 in all. Looking back now to the answers to questions in the House of Commons during the period of the strike shows how out of touch the Colonial Office was at that time with the position on the spot. To-day it is a forgotten story, but at least there is a hope that lessons may be learnt from the unnecessary waste of life.

The trouble began with the field workers of the sugar plantations asking for an increase in wages from 78 cents per ton for cutting and loading of the cane to \$1. Their Union, the Man-Power Citizens' Association, had succeeded in obtaining an increase of only 7 cents. The workers were also dissatisfied with the method of weighing the cane, and felt that the new method of their having to cut and load, instead of the previous method of cutting and dropping, was too exhausting. Working from dawn to 5.30 p.m. with a break in the middle of the day, they could earn only \$14 to \$15 a week cutting and loading four to four and a half tons of sugar cane per day. The Commission states that the 'field workers—more particularly the cane cutters—were genuinely affected in their own minds by a sense of grievance as to certain conditions of their work and also the wages paid.' It is hardly surprising that a breakaway Union, the Guiana Industrial Workers' Union, probably under left-wing political influence, was able to gain the support of the workers, and not only prevent a settlement of the strike but also lead the strikers to violent action to prevent work continuing in the sugar factory.

Rioting was feared but police measures were inadequate; and the Report states 'that if there had been more foresight on the part of the police authorities . . . the necessity to open fire might not have arisen'. The strikers were armed with sticks, cutlasses and missiles, but no evidence was found of a cutlass being used or of any serious injury to a policeman. The police, fearing that the workers would storm the factory, fired to protect life and property, and the Report finds their action admissible. But, the Report goes on, 'we are nevertheless of the opinion that the number of injuries caused by

bullets received *from behind* as compared with the few which entered in front . . . indicates that some shots were fired at persons after they had turned around and were making their escape. . . . We are of the opinion that the evidence has established that after the first few shots there was firing that went beyond the requirements of the situation.' A masterly understatement, as four of the workers who died were shot in the back and only one in the leg. The medical evidence was unable to determine at what point the fourteen workers were injured as the injuries were caused by fragments of bullets.

What are the lessons? It seems obvious that a greater attempt is needed on the part of the Labour Department, the official trade union and the employers' association to understand and deal with the justifiable grievances of workers so that prolonged strikes do not provide fertile ground for the organisation of unofficial unions. And is it not time to consider a better use of batons and tear smoke by the police authorities instead of the posting of a few armed men to deal with unruly crowds? The existence of armed police in the Colonies seems to lead, all to easily, to loss of life.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONSCIENCE

The internal affairs of the Union of South Africa are not, normally, the concern of this journal. But the Union's Native Policy, with its repercussions all over Africa and its profound effect on Colonial problems everywhere, is very much our affair. One question of vital interest to everyone outside the Union is the probability or otherwise of the growth of a civilised attitude to the racial question within it. And in this connection the statement by a director of Messrs. Jonathan Cape's, publishers of Alan Paton's novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, that some 30,000 copies of that book have gone to South Africa, is interesting, if not significant. *Cry, the Beloved Country* (reviewed in these pages in our issue of November, 1948) might almost be described as the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of our day. Are there thirty thousand just men in the Union—or at any rate thirty thousand with uneasy consciences?

J. F. H.

For Reference

September, 1949

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